

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A method for providing emergent and flexible workflow management to a first user, the first user communicating with other users, the first user using a first message-based system having embedded information management resources, the first message-based system having a viewer, the method comprising the operations of:

- (a) generating a message at the first message-based system, the message having metadata;
- (b) updating metadata of the message, the metadata including at least one of the group of a deadline, a reminder, a deferral and an obligation, using the embedded information management resources;
- (c) sending the message to the other users;
- (d) displaying some of the metadata of the message on the viewer of the first message-based system; and
- (e) tracking some of the metadata of the message at the first message-based system.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the first user communicates with a second user, the second user using a second message-based system having embedded information management resources, the second message-based system having a viewer, the method further comprising the operations of:

- (f) receiving the message at the second user system;
- (g) generating a reply message having metadata at the second message-based system;
- (h) updating metadata of the reply message, the metadata including at least one of a second deadline and a second obligation, using the embedded information management resources;
- (i) sending the reply message to the first message-based system;
- (j) displaying some of metadata of the reply message on the viewer of the second message-based system; and

(k) tracking some of the metadata of the reply message at the second message-based system.

3. A system for managing and tracking information items within a first message-based system, the first message-based system being one of a set of message-based systems within a workgroup, the first message-based system having a viewer, the system comprising:

(a) a thrask generating module generating a plurality of thrasks, each of the thrasks including at least one information item having a set of metadata, the metadata including at least one of the group of a deadline, a reminder, a deferral and an obligation;

(b) a sorting module sorting a new information item into one of the thrasks in accordance with at least one criterion;

(c) a display module displaying some of the thrasks and at least one of the metadata of each of the information items in each of the displayed thrasks in the viewer; and

(d) an updating module updating the thrasks and at least one of the metadata.

4. The method of Claim 3 wherein the first message-based system has different capabilities than some in the set of message-based systems.

5. A method for managing and tracking information items within a first message-based system, the first message-based system being one of a set of message-based systems within a shared workgroup, the message-based systems being synchronized periodically with a shared workgroup component on a server, the first message-based system having a viewer, the method comprising the operations of:

(a) generating a plurality of thrasks, each of the thrasks including at least one information item having a set of metadata;

(b) sorting a new information item into one of the thrasks in accordance with at least one criterion;

(c) displaying some of the thrasks and at least one of the metadata of one of the information items in one of the displayed thrasks in the viewer; and

(d) providing a shared view of some of the thrasks to a subset of the message-based systems within the shared workgroup in response to a user selection of an option.

6. The method of Claim 5 further comprising the operation of:

(e) updating at least one of the metadata of one of the information items in one of the thrasks.

7. A system for managing and tracking information items within a first message-based system, the first message-based system being one of a set of message-based systems within a shared workgroup, the message-based systems being synchronized periodically with a shared workgroup component on a server, the first message-based system having a viewer, the system comprising:

(a) a thrask generating module generating a plurality of thrasks, each of the thrasks including at least one information item having a set of metadata;

(b) a sorting module sorting a new information item into one of the thrasks in accordance with at least one criterion;

(c) a display module displaying some of the thrasks and at least one of the metadata of one of the information items in one of the displayed thrasks in the viewer; and

(d) a sharing module providing a shared view of some of the thrasks to a subset of the message-based systems within the shared workgroup in response to a user selection of an option.

8. The system of Claim 7 further comprising:

(e) an updating module updating at least one of the metadata of one of the information items in one of the thrasks.